

Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2015

Disasters without borders: regional resilience for sustainable development

Publication overview

Information and Communications
Technology and Disaster Risk
Reduction Division



IN BRIEF

In the wake of the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, APDR 2015 assesses the state of resilience of Asia-Pacific, and identifies emerging new risks and the sectors that are most at risk. It focuses on cross-border disasters, such as earthquakes, droughts, tropical cyclones and floods, and highlights that only by coming together in the spirit of cooperation can the Asia-Pacific region hope to become truly disaster resilient. The report identifies several neglected areas of disaster risk reduction that need to be addressed urgently. Drought, a forgotten disaster in the region, pushes vast numbers of people into debt and poverty. The report shows how the impact can be mitigated by treating drought as a long-term, recurring risk. The report also analyses the value of multi-hazard early warning systems and maps out the importance of providing right information to right people at the right time. The report concludes that while investing in disaster risk reduction is proven to be cost effective, the political commitment has not transformed into adequate actions on the ground.

CHAPTERS



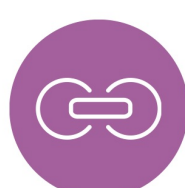
Resilience to
disasters in Asia
and the Pacific



Drought - the
forgotten
disaster



The value of
early warning



Right information,
right people, right
time



At the heart of
sustainable
development

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Key message

Regional cooperation is necessary
to address transboundary risks



Regional
cooperation



addresses



Transboundary
risks



Chapter 1: Resilience to disasters in Asia and the Pacific

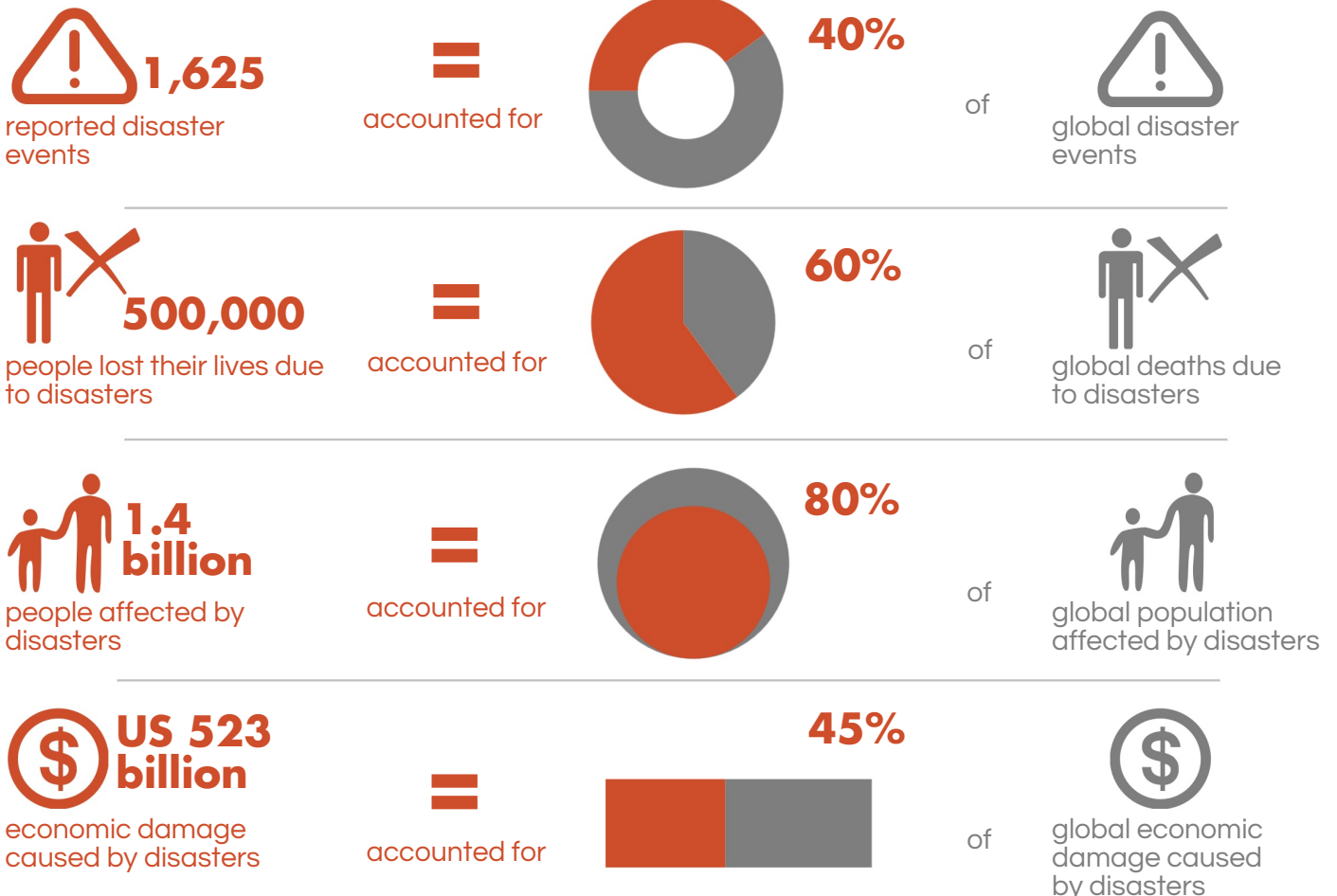


Asia and the Pacific is the world's most disaster-prone region – exposed to earthquakes, floods, droughts and typhoons, and many other powerfully destructive natural phenomena. Over recent decades the countries of the region have been striving to become more resilient to disasters, and protect their most vulnerable communities. But there is a lot more to do. The region's rapid economic growth is exacerbating many existing risks and creating new ones.

In the Asia-Pacific region

- 1 The majority of disasters are transboundary in nature
- 2 Disasters can push the 'near-poor' into poverty and further impoverish many others
- 3 Annual losses could average US \$160 billion by 2030
- 4 740 million of the urban population are now at 'extreme' to 'high' disaster risk
- 5 Human activities are eroding environmental buffers and reducing the capacity of ecosystems to protect against natural hazards
- 6 Investing in DRR is proven cost-effective but many countries have not made sufficient progress

Over the period of 2005-2014 in Asia-Pacific





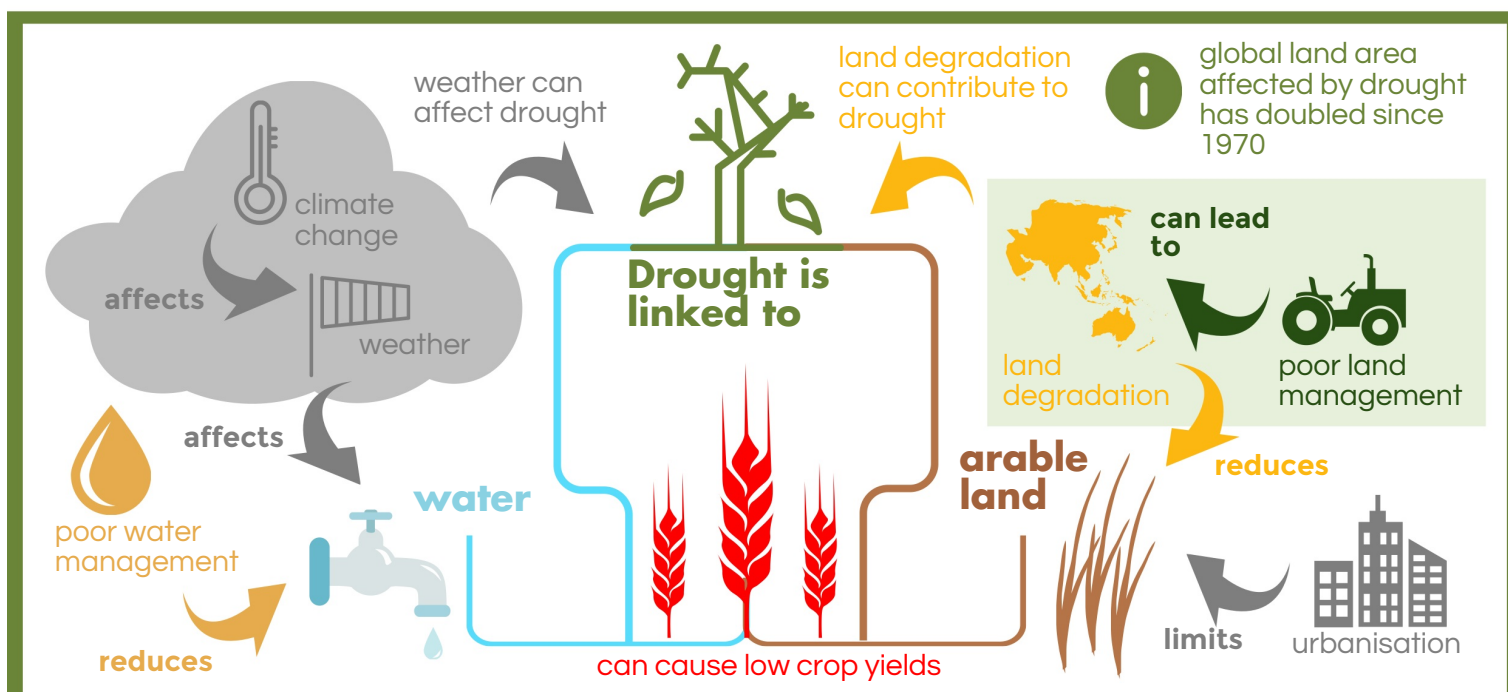
Chapter 2: Drought - the forgotten disaster



Drought is one of the region's most devastating natural disasters. But it is a slow and silent killer, and therefore often forgotten. Compared with earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons and floods, drought is a gradual phenomenon – and the devastation it causes is indirect, by steadily reducing supplies of water and food. Combatting drought requires constant vigilance, combining high-tech monitoring with local information and knowledge – and determined efforts to protect ecosystems and livelihoods.

In the Asia-Pacific region

- 1 **Drought is a complex but forgotten transboundary risk which manifests in different ways**
- 2 **It affected more than 200 million people in the last decade, largely poor and vulnerable**
- 3 **Drought is often under reported and receives inadequate attention**
- 4 **Drought exacerbates poverty, farmers hit by drought may resort to “erosive” coping strategies**
- 5 **Land and water management are linked with drought and climate change may make things worse**
- 6 **Signs of drought can be observed much earlier using satellite information**



Asia-Pacific Since 1970

US 53 billion
economic damage caused by drought

1.6 billion
people affected by drought

poor farmers may remove children from school, take high-interest loans or sell off income-generating assets to cope with the impact of drought

as a result

Food production

however

by 50% in 2030 or 70% in 2050

needs to increase



in order to



Chapter 3: The value of early warning



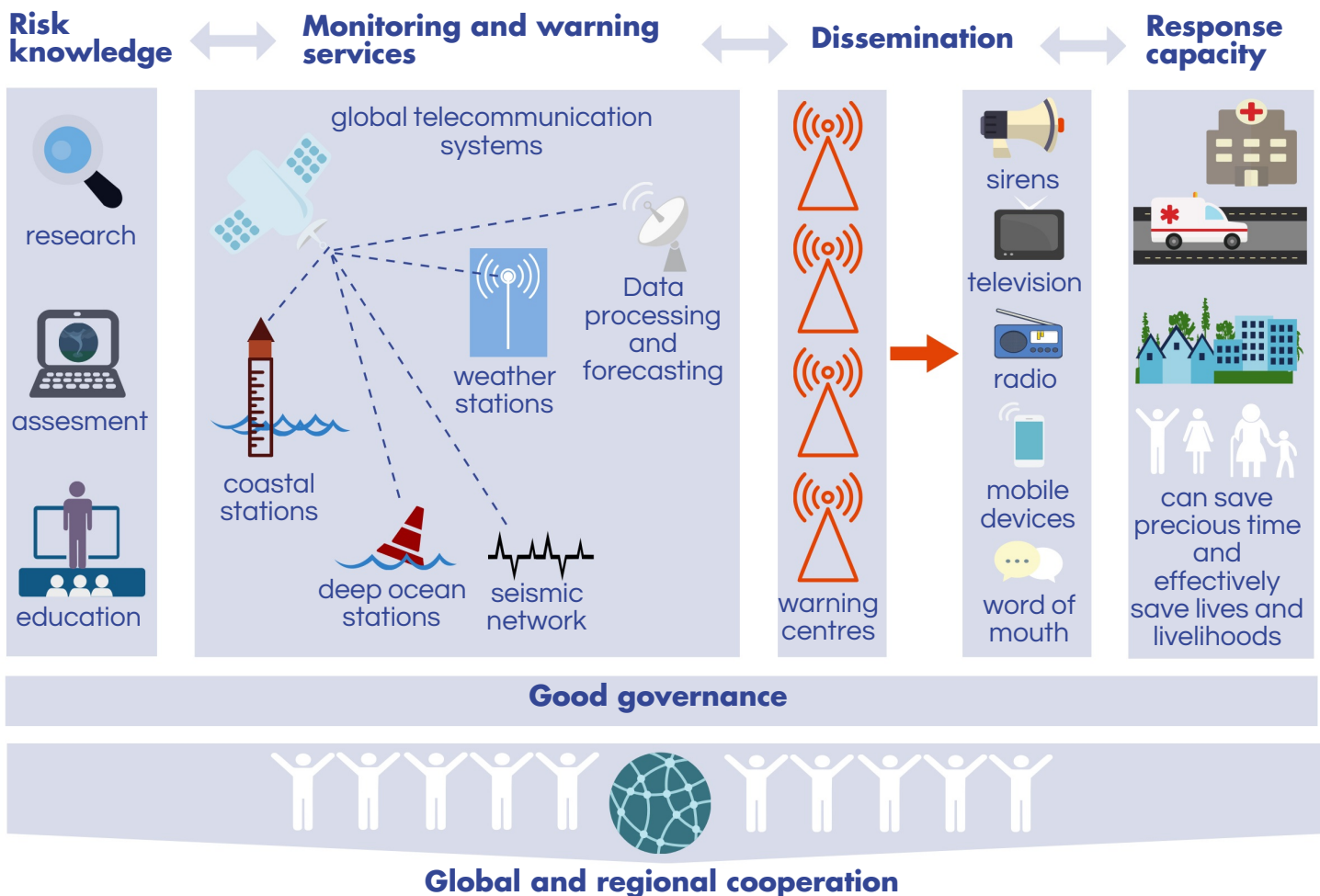
An effective early warning system is a key component of disaster risk reduction. Around Asia and the Pacific such systems save thousands of lives and many millions of dollars.

An effective warning system combines science and technology with practical local approaches and is fully integrated into broader national and regional strategies for building resilience and reducing disaster risks.

In the Asia-Pacific region

- 1 **Early warning saves lives and is cost effective**
Through regional cooperation progress has been made in strengthening early warning since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami
- 2 **Low-capacity, high-risk countries need more support**
- 3 **Long-term financial sustainability is a challenge**
- 4 **Making systems multi-hazard and regional can bring efficiencies and enhance sustainability**

End-to-end early warning and mitigation systems





Chapter 4: Right information, right people, right time



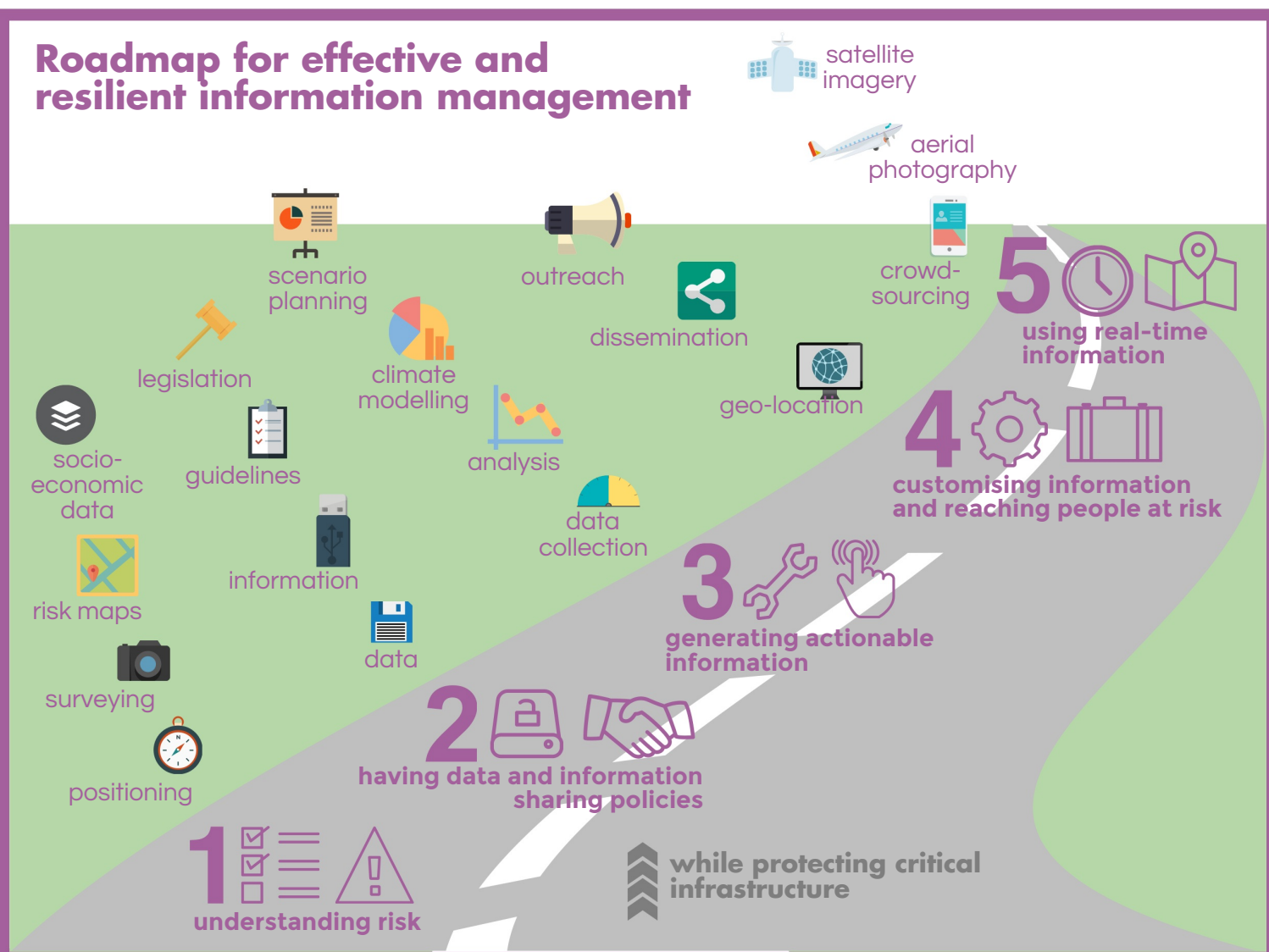
A critical part of disaster risk management is managing the flow of information. Getting the right information to the right people at the right time saves lives and reduces losses, while also strengthening people's resilience to disasters.

Some Asia-Pacific countries now have state-of-the-art disaster information management systems, but others have major gaps in data and analysis.

In the Asia-Pacific region

- 1 Understanding disaster risk asks what is at risk, what was lost and what could be our future losses?
- 2 Many people do not have access to reliable disaster information and often lack the capacity to use it
- 3 Information management, involving all, lacks sufficient coordination
- 4 Challenges remain in accessing innovative technologies and knowledge products
- 5 Lives are at risk if communities do not receive timely information
- 6 Transboundary risk management requires sharing of information

Roadmap for effective and resilient information management





Chapter 5: At the heart of sustainable development



Disaster risk reduction cannot be confined to one or two government departments. Rather it is a responsibility for every part of government – from education to health to transport to social protection. Just as every sector can be affected by earthquakes or floods or cyclones, so every sector needs to consider how to make its activities disaster resilient.

In the Asia-Pacific region

- 1 Integrating DRR is essential for achieving the SDGs in the region
- 2 Disasters affect all sectors so every sector needs to make its activities resilient
- 3 DRM strategies are estimated to have a four-fold return in terms of mitigating the impacts of disasters
- 4 More countries have DRR policies and legislation but many have yet to incorporate these into develop planning
- 5 As of 2013, 14 out of 64 countries in the region had a multi-sectoral national platform for DRR as prescribed by HFA
- 6 Disasters are addressed in a fragmented way, with more attention placed on response and less on DRR



will not be achieved



In Asia-Pacific, 15 out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals are closely linked with DRR

